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Of Exodus and of Rapture: A Theological Reading of the Openings of *Battlestar Galactica* by Glen Larson (ABC, 1978) and the Reimagined Series by Ron D. Moore (Sci-Fi, 2003)

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- 1 The contrast between the two versions of *Battlestar Galactica* (ABC, 1978-79; Sci-Fi, 2003-2009) provides an excellent witness to the evolution of American society over the last thirty years, as both the original 1970s series and its reimagined counterpart are remarkably in tune with the dominant religious beliefs of their respective periods. The creators of both BSG series wove into their narrative numerous references to Scripture to give an added dimension to the storylines and dialogues. Rather than a study of the various theologies and religious practices of the Colonials and the cybernetic Cylons depicted in the entire series, this study will be a rhetorical analysis of how the two series initially mobilize biblical texts. This article will concentrate on a comparative theological analysis of the 1978 movie-pilot for the original *Battlestar Galactica*¹ and of the 2003 *Battlestar Galactica* mini-series that served as the pilot for the series by Ronald D. Moore. By examining the pilots' narratives in isolation from how they were developed in the rest of each series, this article aims to underscore the theological positions portrayed at the beginning of these narratives, positions which were given depth, detail, and in the case of the latter version of BSG, were complicated and even inverted in later episodes. This article, therefore, examines the theological stances announced to their respective audiences, which allowed each series' authors to surprise (or perhaps, in the case of the latter incarnation, confuse) their audiences as the narrative unfolded and contradicted what audiences had initially been led to believe.
- 2 The difference between the original series, called *The Epic Series* (TES) by international fans, and the new series, *The Reimagined Series* (TRS), goes beyond the updating of

characters, plots, costumes and sets². A profound change was operated in the imbedded theologies of the narratives and in the values they each present. The narrative of the *TES* pilot clearly takes its inspiration from Hebrew Scriptures narratives, more specifically from the book of Exodus. It presents the beginnings of a journey to the Promised Land (Earth), where hope for – and in – humankind is reaffirmed. Three decades later, the *TRS* mini-series shifted to a New Testament narrative, more specifically that of Johannine narrative (the Book of Revelation and the Epistles of John). In this new battle between the forces of Good and Evil, humankind sees its Fall as a punishment for its sins and arrogance.

***Battlestar Galactica: The Epic Series* – an Exodus Narrative**

- 3 In its themes and storylines, *TES* is a Hebrew Scriptures narrative. Like the Israelites in the first books of the First Testament, the Colonials embark on an epic journey for survival in search of a place to settle while surrounded by more powerful neighbours. The authors of *TES* stressed this link by inserting numerous overt references throughout the movie-pilot. For example, after an important military defeat, the survivors of the Colonies are asked to search for the Thirteenth Colony, which departed millennia ago for the planet Earth. This group echoes the story of the “lost tribe of Israel”, the thirteenth tribe of Israel (the descendants of Levi, son of Jacob) in its connection to the Promised Land³. It also echoes a passage of the Book of Mormon when, during the reign of King Zedekiah (about 600 BCE), the Prophet Lehi leads the remnants of the tribe of Joseph to Ancient America⁴. The lost tribe of Israel is central to the Jewish and Mormon faiths in the same way that the lost colony Earth is to *Battlestar Galactica*.
- 4 More specifically, though, the narrative of *TES* is based on the book of Exodus. In this second book of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Israelites, after generations of captivity in Egypt, are thrown out of Egypt and forced to undertake a long, dangerous journey leading them to the gates of the Promised Land. Like the Israelites, the Colonials are forced to leave, without advance warning or preparation, the land they had inhabited for generations⁵. In both cases, the departure does not happen without confrontation. Both are followed by what seems to be a far superior enemy army, and their chances for survival seem slim at best. Like the Israelites, the Colonials have to cross a desert after departing from their home. In *TES*, interstellar space is that desert. This part of space is filled with humans, just as, in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Israelites pass through the lands of many peoples before arriving at the gates of the land of Canaan.
- 5 The close narrative parallel between the book of Exodus and *TES* is especially obvious in the (unfortunately never-aired) Colonial Anthem. In a sequence deleted from the final version of the movie-pilot, Commander Adama sings with a group of survivors the following hymn:

Hail to Thee O Lord of Manna
Bounteous be Thy hand
Blessed be the Core of Freedom
Throughout the Land
Keep us safe from the Powers of darkness
Liberty and Might
Man rejoices, Land of Zion

Lead us by Thy light
 We salute the cause of Freedom
 Leaves our flag unfurled
 Standing for eternal right through
 The star wide worlds
 Keep us safe from the Powers of darkness
 Liberty and Might
 Man rejoices, Land of Zion
 Lead us by Thy Might⁶.

- 6 Written in a style reminiscent of the King James Bible, this hymn echoes what Moses and the Israelites sing to the Lord after being delivered from the Egyptian threat:

The Lord is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. [...] You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance — the place, Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, Lord, your hands established⁷.

- 7 The Colonial anthem/hymn also makes references to subjects that are essential to the Exodus narrative, such as manna, the heavenly food provided to the Israelites in the desert. In addition, just as the Lord protected the Israelites from Pharaoh's army during their crossing of the Sea, the Colonial anthem/hymn implies that a superior being, the Lord of Manna, can protect the humans from the Powers of darkness (i.e., the Cylons). Finally, the use of the word "Zion", referring to a mountain of Jerusalem that would become the spiritual centre of the Promised Land, strengthens the link between the two narratives.

Commander Adama: The New Moses

- 8 In this *space exodus*, Commander Adama emerges as a new Moses. Like Moses, he is portrayed as having priestly as well as secular authority. His special knowledge – information and understanding about the location of the fabled planet Earth, knowledge that no one else seems to have – and his ascendancy over his people give him prophetic qualities similar to those of Moses in Hebrew Scriptures. The main difference between the two narratives is the absence of the character of Aaron: whereas Moses had "a heavy tongue" and relied on Aaron to speak publicly in his stead, Adama possesses the eloquence necessary to lead his people in the journey that lies ahead⁸. After the destruction of the Colonies, the speech in which he instructs all survivors to gather everything and follow him is similar to Moses's call to flee from Egypt and into the desert. "The Israelites did as Moses instructed [...]. The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. Many other people went up with them, and also large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds⁹." Indeed, the Colonial ships fleeing from the Cylons are often described in the show as "a ragtag fleet of fugitive vessels."
- 9 Commander Adama is more than a mere embodiment of hope in the future in the form of a great leader of men. He is also the personification of the Promised Land. In Hebrew, the word *'adamâ* is a non-political term designating fertile and arable land, the basis (הַבַּיִת) of Israel's physical survival¹⁰. It is the land that sustains the people and from which the first human, the *'adhami*.e., Adam of Genesis) was fashioned אָדָם¹¹. Throughout the

Hebrew Scriptures, the Israelites entertain a special relationship with the land where they dwell, as Theodore Hiebert points out, underscoring how the promise of this land allowed them to bear “wanderings, exile and slavery”¹². A promise made in these terms in Deuteronomy to Abraham and his descendants:

See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the Lord swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them” [...] “so that you may live long in the land the Lord swore to your ancestors to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey¹³.

- 10 For the Israelites, the *'adamâ* equates with the concept of the dwelling place, of home¹⁴. In the same manner, Commander Adama is literally both the way home and the personification of home itself. He is the anchor to what is left of home for the humans.

Divergence with Biblical Depictions of Despair

- 11 The clear parallel with the Hebrew Scriptures in *TES* ends with the sharp disjunction between the catastrophic events depicted and the human characters' seemingly unchanged outlook and values. *TES* is the story of a thousand-year genocidal war against humanity climaxing in a Holocaust (Adama calls it such) at the hands of the Cylon Empire. It should be, as it is in the first books of the Bible, a story of despair and dissolution interspersed with periods of hope brought by divine intervention. Instead, the main characters of *TES* keep a sense of certainty and hope for the future under Adama's leadership. Despite the destruction of the Twelve Colonies and the fact that their survival is far from certain, they appear unsuspecting as well as untraumatized, carefree and naïve almost to the point of blindness. This is manifest in the second part of the *TES* movie-pilot, when the human survivors meet the Ovions and seem ready to settle on the first inhabited planet they encounter. During their survey of the planet Carillon, the main characters are not surprised to meet other humans, and start to interact with them unwonderingly; Starbuck, for instance, is ready to hire a singer and put her on tour, even if the only world he has ever known has just been destroyed.
- 12 The humans' attitude on Carillon is in fact reminiscent of the episode of the Golden Calf in Exodus. The Colonials are ready to let go the pursuit of their Promised Land in exchange for instant pleasures: “they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry”¹⁵. There is, however, one important difference: where the Israelites turned to idolatry when they believed their God had abandoned them, the Colonial survivors are not prompted to remain on Carillon by a loss of hope. On the contrary, they believe that the planet is “all [they] have hoped for”, as the message from the Colonial scouts states. Yet, just as Moses saves his people from divine wrath by destroying the Golden Calf, Commander Adama, refusing to be lured by the gold and luxury of Carillon, engineers a plan to reveal the Ovions' deception, saving his people from destruction by the Cylons, which/whom these bird-like people in fact serve.
- 13 Throughout the movie-pilot, characters neither act nor speak as if they had just witnessed the mass destruction of all they knew. Starbuck still jokes, womanizes and smokes cigars, as if in complete denial. In the scene where his lover, Adama's daughter Athena, reveals the true extent of the destruction to him, he refuses to believe her and struts away. While the disjunction between the narrative and the characters' behavior is

less prevalent in some secondary characters, they too are quite inconsistent. For instance, one young boy (Boxey), is distraught and unresponsive after the loss of his pet dagget (a Colonial dog) in one scene, but the next shows him excited at the arrival of a Colonial fighter, and, in the midst of destruction, asking if he can get a ride. Athena seems the exception in displaying emotions consistent in their response to the catastrophic events endured. She appears devastated on several occasions and is shown crying repeatedly. While it appears that the loss of her brother Zac is what truly troubles her and that she mourns him more than she does the Colonies – even declaring to Starbuck that she does not want to love again –, in her grief, she seems to provide the only credible reaction to the Holocaust and Exile that the Colonials are undergoing.

***Battlestar Galactica: The Reimagined Series* and the New Testament – Armageddon**

- 14 The new incarnation of *Battlestar Galactica* is more than a remake. Although Ronald D. Moore has kept a similar plot – the destruction of the Twelve Colonies by the Cylons and the flight of the survivors into unknown space – he has given the *TRS* an entirely new narrative structure, more aligned with the New Testament than with the Hebrew Scriptures. The *TRS* mini-series is less the saga of a people than a focus on the individual salvation of each character. The Cylons still appear to be the enemy, but, like the first Christians who had to defend their position against peoples from the same faith family, the Colonials have to find their “path” not merely through the galaxy and against the Cylons, but within themselves and sometimes against friends and allies.
- 15 The book of Revelation and the Epistles of John heavily inspire the narrative of the new mini-series, which, like Johannine literature, is highly symbolic, replete with codes and implied information. These biblical texts, which probably date back to the beginning of the second century, sprang from a period of persecution endured by the first Christians. The core of their narrative is the battle between Good and Evil: the climax of this confrontation appears in the book of Revelation, where the fate of humanity is decided in an apocalyptic battle.
- 16 The battle of Armageddon takes its name from the real location of Har Megido (literally, the mountain Megido). In Ancient times, the valley at the foot of this mountain was traditionally a place to gather troops in preparation for battle. In the biblical prophecy, this will be the battle of End Times: “They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. [...] Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon”¹⁶. According to the book of Revelation, a series of omens will precede the final battle of the war between forces of Good and Evil, in which eventually, God’s chosen people will destroy Evil.
- 17 At the core of the *TRS* mini-series pilot, the destruction of the Colonies is clearly coded as such a final confrontation. The near eradication of humanity by the Cylons’ devastating nuclear attack is the climax of the narrative. Though later in the series, the Cylons will be revealed to be a much more complex society and will be shown trying to save humanity (and themselves) by, among other strategies, creating human-Cylon hybrids¹⁷, they appear, at the start of the series, as a force of Evil – as those who destroy humanity and bring an end to Colonial existence. On several occasions, the human characters state that

the Cylons' attack is "apocalyptic" and seems to announce the End Time. On a rescue mission on the planet Caprica, Helo declares to his co-pilot Boomer, as they witness relentless nuclear explosions: "Look at those clouds and tell me it isn't the end of everything." Later on, before embarking on a dangerous mission, Starbuck makes a similar assertion when she confesses to Apollo her own indirect responsibility in his brother Zak's death (she had given Zak¹⁸ a passing grade on his flight test despite his flying errors, because she was in love with him and he later crashed). She explains her belated confession as urgent in the face of the present catastrophe: "It is the end of the world, Lee. I thought I should confess my sins." The authors' intentions are thus unmistakable¹⁹ in this devastating battle, in which both the fate and faith of humanity are at stake.

Dispensationalism and The Rapture

- ¹⁸ TRS's initial theological narrative is also largely inspired by dispensationalist ideas not specifically founded in the Bible, but that rely heavily on Johannine writings. Before the Protestant Reformation, little attention was given the following Pauline verse: "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever²⁰." However, in the 1830s, John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren as a religious denomination, linked this verse with others in the Gospel according to Matthew:

Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. [...] Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left²¹.

- ¹⁹ This physical transportation, by God from Earth into Heaven, of the bodies of all saved Christians is now commonly known as the Rapture. This Christian eschatological system gained great popularity starting in the 1970s, due in part to Hal Lindsey's books (especially *The Late Great Planet Earth*) and to the mid-1990s *Left Behind* novels by LaHaye and Jenkins²². Today it plays a large part in dozens of popular films and television series²³. A 2010 Pew Research Center survey found that 41% of Americans believed that the Second Coming would definitively happen before 2050, and a 2011 survey found that 52% of Evangelical leaders in the USA thought the Rapture would occur within their lifetime²⁴. Dispensationalist ideas, and the Rapture specifically, are now part of mainline American Evangelicalism.
- ²⁰ In the TRS pilot mini-series, there are several visuals of the Rapture. After the destruction of the Colonies, the remaining survivors leave their planets to join the Battlestar Galactica fleet in interstellar space, and ships of all sizes are seen gaining altitude as they lift off from the ground. The Rapture is even more obviously depicted in the scene when Helo and Boomer decide to take aboard their small fighter craft a few of the survivors of the first waves of nuclear destruction on Caprica. The chosen ones are selected by a lottery and allowed to take off, and the remaining humans are left behind to face the enemy and certain death.

- 21 In the various dispensationalist systems, there is always an intermediate time frame known as the period of Tribulation, where non-Christians and Christians who missed the Rapture are left on Earth and remain until Christ arrives to set up his earthly kingdom. During those times, the elected Christian believers are *translated* into immortal bodies before the great persecutions by the Antichrists are unleashed. The Antichrists are the embodiment of evil but come convincingly disguised as wholly good and bringers of truth. They are the foretellers of the End Time: “[...] even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour²⁵.” Within these prophetic texts, after a period of seven years, Jesus returns in the Second Coming at the battle of Armageddon, to defeat the Antichrists.

False Prophets and Number 6 (66)

- 22 In the *TRS* pilot mini-series narrative, the human-form Cylons appear to play the same role as the Antichrists in Johannine literature. The apparition of the first human-form Cylon at the very beginning of the mini-series pilot is the first sign of the Cylons’ return and the beginning of their campaign to annihilate the humans. Furthermore, their infiltration of human civilisation, sometimes through sleeper agents unaware of their own true nature, initially seems to reinforce this association with the Antichrists²⁶. In these games of deception, the character named Gaius Baltar plays a central role. Presented as one of the greatest minds of his time, in charge of the defence systems for the Colonies, Baltar tries to cover up by any means possible his unwitting role in the Holocaust of the human race. Like the false prophet of Johannine literature, he hides his true identity from those who continue to respect him and are impressed by his intelligence: “But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped its image”²⁷. Among other signs, Baltar may recall the false prophet branded by the Beast under the number 666²⁸, since the human-form Cylon who has seduced and deceived him is known as “Number Six” (even if this name, strictly speaking, is a reference to her being the “sixth” model of human-form Cylons, out of a total of twelve). After the destruction of Caprica, Baltar is permanently marked by this “beast”, since she remains a living, speaking presence inside his mind, that continues to guide him. As a deceiver and a *femme fatale*, Number Six²⁹ is also initially associated with the Whore of Babylon³⁰; like the latter, she primarily wears red and most often appears in a sexy, revealing cocktail dress.

Flawed humans

- 23 However, Baltar is by no means the only flawed human. The *TRS* pilot sets the scene for a more realistic survival narrative than the *TES* opening. After priestess Elosha’s funeral prayer at the end of the pilot, the remaining Colonials mumble, hopelessly, the ritual response “So Say We All”. Commander Adama’s intervention reinfuses enthusiasm and meaning into this collective, performative assertion of community. In an emotional speech, he confronts his troops, comparing their fate with that of their fallen companions: “Are they the lucky ones? [...] Maybe it would’ve been better for us to have died quickly back on the colonies with our families, instead of dying here slowly in the emptiness of dark space.” He then discloses to the fleet that he knows the location of the

planet Earth, and promises that he will guide them to this Promised Land. However, what he is offering is false hope based on a lie: he does not actually know the location of Earth and has spoken as a pragmatic leader, not as a true prophet.

- 24 This lie seems to reflect the flawed nature of the humans. We are told from the beginning, by Adama himself, that as a race, humans are responsible for their own misfortune. The Cylons, “the creation of Man, of Man’s arrogance”, are the instrument of humankind’s punishment and of its eventual destruction as Adama points out in his improvised speech as he prepares to decommission the *Galactica* at the very start of the pilot, before the Cylon attack is known. Reflecting on his responsibility in the loss his son Zak, he declares “We are flawed creatures”, adding “Why are we, as a people, worth saving?”
- 25 In *TSR*, Gaius Baltar appears as the personification of humanity being punished for its sins. He continuously displays arrogance, believing himself superior to the rest of the human population, although his lust has guided him into the arms of an undercover Cylon agent. But whereas there was no doubt that the 1978 *TES* version of Baltar was evil – in league with the Cylons out of a desire to rule the universe, in true Luciferian mode – *TRIS*’s Baltar is multifaceted, complex, and weak. He appears both as the deceiver and the deceived³¹, as he lies to his fellow humans to hide his role in the destruction of the Colonies, and carries the guilt of his transgressions, both sexual and technological, throughout the mini-series, much in the way he carries Number Six in his mind. At the end of the pilot, he even appears to the viewer to have gone insane (although we will later learn that his madness is part of his gradual enlightenment and salvation)³².

Popular religion

- 26 *Battlestar Galactica*, in both its incarnations, remains a major work of speculative fiction with a far-reaching cultural impact, although the remake, because of both its length and proximity to us³³, now exercises considerably more influence than its predecessor. Numerous authors have referenced either series as an illustration of the popular culture of its time, in often polarizing ways. In 1979, Canadian religious anthropologist and historian Irving Hexham asserted that *TES* was the perfect illustration of the secularisation of American culture. He believed that the original series reflected a new mythological background rooted in the 1960s counterculture and posited that the beliefs in the Age of Aquarius aimed to become an alternative to Christian orthodoxy. Within the popular faith in science, which he saw as taking the place of Christian culture, *TES* represented in his view, “a new irrational attack [on Christianity] based upon romantic pseudoscientific mythology”³⁴. He went so far as to state that “[...] Christians must be alert to the mythology itself and refuse to succumb to its vague attractiveness”³⁵, clearly making the viewing of the series part of a “religious battle” in itself.
- 27 The paradox, or the irony, is that in the *TRIS* remake, the Cylon foe of humanity is revealed to be monotheistic, and to believe in the “one true God”. The Cylons in fact resist the “new mythologies” of the Colonials who are polytheistic, complicating this tale of Revelation.
- 28 Sylvaine Bataille argues that the Greco-Roman-inspired theology of the Colonials in *TRIS* is an attempt by Ronald D. Moore to infuse his science-fictional series with realist elements, the better to confuse us as to the where we stand in time as the story unfolds. She points out that Moore creates the illusion of a known environment for his audience by using

both recognizable names already found in *TES* and an abundance of references to Greco-Roman civilization and religion that viewers would recognize although they are (obviously) not a part of their own daily faith³⁶. I would argue that the dispensationalist elements serve this purpose even more pointedly. Using contemporary popular religion allows Moore to create contrast between his Colonials and Cylons and embed even more recognizable contemporary cultural elements in his science-fiction story³⁷ – to imbue it in what Clifford Geertz would have called an “aura of factuality”³⁸.

- 29 Both series are thus in sync with the contemporary popular theology of their respective times. The *TES* movie-pilot executive producer and main screenwriter, Glen A. Larson, was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a Church founded and currently thriving in the USA (even though it represents fewer than 2% of all religious believers, it is still on the rise). Not every aspect of the *TES* is imbued with Mormonism, but every once in a while, Commander Adama makes a reference to, or extrapolates from, its principal doctrine³⁹. As for *TRS*, the mini-series-pilot is very much in tune with the beliefs of present times: a high number of Americans believe in dispensationalism, and are certain they will experience the Rapture, End Times, and the Second Coming in their lifetime. Thus, though the action of the television series *Battlestar Galactica* unfolds in a distant galaxy, theological readings of the pilot episodes of both of its versions highlight that its cultural narrative is always rooted in present time, on this planet Earth.

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NOTES

1. The 1978 movie-pilot was released in several versions, including a 125 min theatrical release in Canada, but a three-hour version served as the first episode of the 1978 televised *Battlestar Galactica*, re-titled "Saga of the Lost World" (S01E01).
2. For this article, the following releases were used : *Battlestar Galactica - The Complete Epic Series*, created Glen N. Larson, Universal Studios, 2004, region 1, DVD ; *Battlestar Galactica: The Miniseries*, created by Ronald D. Moore, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2003, region 1, DVD.
3. Deuteronomy 18:1.
4. 1 Nephi 18; Michael Lorenzen, "Battlestar Galactica and Mormonism", *The Information Literacy Land of Confusion* blog, posted 09 May 2009, accessed 8 August 2014, <http://www.informationliteracy.net/search/label/Battlestar%20Galactica>.
5. Exodus 12:33a.
6. *Battlestar Galactica - The Complete Epic Series*, created Glen N. Larson, Universal Studios, 2004, region 1, DVD no 1, 37th and 38th deleted scenes.
7. Exodus 15:2-3, 17.

8. Exodus 4:10
9. Exodus 12:35a ; 12:37-38.
10. W. Janzen, "Land", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, ed. David Noel Freedman *et al.*, New York, Doubleday, 1992, p. 144 [p. 143-154].
11. J.G. Plöger, "aDHĀMĀH", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, revised ed., vol. 1, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans, 1977, p. 95-96 [p. 88-98].
12. Theodore Hiebert, "Land", in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman *et al.*, ed, Grand Rapids, MI, Williams B. Eerdmans, 2000, p. 788 [788-789].
13. Deuteronomy 1:8, 11:9.
14. Plöger, p. 94.
15. Exodus 32:6b.
16. Revelation 16:14 and 16:16.
17. See, for instance, Florent Favard, "La promesse d'un dénouement: énigmes, quêtes et voyages dans le temps dans les séries télévisées de science-fiction contemporaines," Doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux, 6 Nov. 2015.
18. The spelling shifts from "Zac" in the 1978 version to "Zak" in the reboot.
19. "Sin," and its various meanings, will be a recurring theme throughout *TRS's* full run; see Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr., *The Theology of Battlestar Galactica. American Christianity in the 2004-2009 Television Series*, Jefferson (N.C.), McFarland, 2012, p. 139-152.
20. Thessalonians 4:17.
21. Matthew 24:30-31, 24:40-41.
22. Steven Rawle, "Real-imagining Terror in *Battlestar Galactica*. Negotiating Real and Fantasy in *Battlestar Galactica's* Political Metaphor," in *Battlestar Galactica : Investigating Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, ed. Roz Kaveney and Jennifer Stoy, London and NewYork, I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 129-153.
23. Jon R. Stone, "A Fire in the Sky: 'Apocalyptic' Themes on the Silver Screen," in *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*, ed. Eric Mazur and Kate McCarthy, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 62-79.
24. Pew Research Center, "Public Sees a Future Full of Promise and Peril. Life in 2050: Amazing Science, Familiar Threats," 22 June 2010, <http://www.people-press.org/2010/06/22/public-sees-a-future-full-of-promise-and-peril/> and "Global Survey Of Evangelical Protestant Leaders," 22 June 2011, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/06/22/global-survey-of-evangelical-protestant-leaders/>
25. 1 John 2:18.
26. 2 John 1:7.
27. Revelation 19:20a.
28. "This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666", Revelation 13:18.
29. Later in the series, she will be referred to as Caprica Six to differentiate her from other Number Six Cylons. In later seasons, Caprica Six will be revealed to truly love Baltar, protecting him, even becoming his *de facto* spouse. See Matthew Jones, "Butch Girls, Brittle Boys, Sexless Cylons: Some Gender Problems in *Battlestar Galactica*" in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigating Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, Roz Kaveney and Jennifer Stoy, eds., London and NewYork, I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 154-185.
30. "The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes, and of the abominations of the earth". Revelation 17:4-5.
31. See also Wetmore, *op.cit.*, p. 139-152.
32. Jones, p. 157-8.

33. The *TRS* mini-series-pilot has more recently been analyzed as influenced by the American post 9/11 context: the Colonials' reaction toward the Cylons are now, in this view, associated with xenophobia, Islamophobia, and all the fears and confusion of the "War on Terror". See Steve Rawle, "Real-Imagining Terror in *Battlestar Galactica*: Negotiating Real and Fantasy in *BSG*'s Political Metaphor", *Battlestar Galactica: Investigating Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, ed. Roz Kaveney, and Jennifer Stoy, London, IB Tauris, p. 132-141.
34. Irving Hexham, "Battlestar Galactica and the New Mythology", *HIS*, May, 1979, p. 17 [17-19].
35. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
36. Sylvaine Bataille, "Les pièges du temps: la réappropriation de l'Antiquité gréco-latine dans *Battlestar Galactica* (Sci-Fi, 2003-2009)", *GRAAT* online n°6 : *Les pièges des nouvelles séries télévisées américaines*, ed. Sarah Hatchuel and Monica Michlin, 2009: <http://www.graat.fr/backissuepiegesseriectv.htm>.
37. Despite the complexity that both Colonial and Cylon religions will develop later in *TRS*, I would argue, as others have, that many of the religious expressions in the series ring hollow and crumble from their contradictions. See Douglas E. Cowan, "Religion in Science Fiction Film and Television," *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture: Theories, Themes, Products and Practices*, ed. Terry Ray Clark and Dan Clanton, Jr., Routledge, New York, 2012, p. 45-46.
38. Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York, Fontana Press, 1993, p. 87-125. See also "Introduction," *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*, ed. Eric Mazur and Kate McCarthy, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 1-14.
39. James E. Ford, "Battlestar Galactica and Mormon Theology", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 17, 1983, p. 84 [p. 83-87].

ABSTRACTS

The theological dimension of the pilot mini-series (2003) of the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* (Ron D. Moore, Sci-Fi, 2003-2009) sharply contrasts with that of the original series (Glen Larson, ABC, 1978-1979). In the original *BSG*, the last humans are in Exodus, and cross the desert-that-is-space in search of the promised land of Earth. In the reimagined series, the pilot mini-series is more clearly apocalyptic and points to contemporary forms of dispensationalism, and especially, belief in the Rapture.

La dimension théologique de la mini-série pilote de *Battlestar Galactica* (Ron D. Moore, Sci-Fi, 2003) contraste fortement avec celle de la série originale de Glen Larson (ABC, 1978). Dans cette dernière, les derniers humains vivent un Exode, et traversent le désert de l'espace à la recherche de la Terre Promise, qui est littéralement la Terre. Le pilote de la version « réimaginée » par Ron D. Moore (Sci-Fi, 2003) se donne plus clairement à lire comme apocalyptique et se réfère aux formes contemporaines du dispensationalisme, notamment de l'Enlèvement.

INDEX

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